

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING COMPLEXITY - 2009

The following list of complexity elements are presented as to provide a review guide for Agency Administrators and staff to review and consider in analyzing the complexity or predicted complexity of a fire situation.

Use of the Guidelines:

1. Analyze each element and check if that element is a factor of concern for this incident.
2. Fire Complexity and ultimately Incident Management Team determination is based on the current and predicted fire situation. Discussion between the Incident Commander, Fire support Staff and the Agency Administrator is critical in determining the Type of Team configuration that will be needed for the Incident. Careful consideration should be given to the specific question(s) that are checked.
3. The question content and not a total number of checked items should be used as discussion points between the Agency Administrator, Host Unit Staff, Incident Commander, and his/her Incident Management Team for determining whether the Incident is moving upward or downward in Complexity. Upward trending fire complexity is indicated by increasing numbers of checked elements while declining fire complexity is indicated by decreasing numbers of checked elements. Managers should give careful consideration to the specific complexity elements that are checked and use this in determining the appropriate management organization for the specific incident.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Potential for blow-up conditions - **Any combination of fuels, weather and topography excessively endangering personnel.**

Smoke Management - **Any situation which creates a significant public response, such as smoke in a metropolitan area or visual pollution in high-use scenic areas.**

COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS

A. FIRE BEHAVIOR: Observed or Predicted

1. Burning Index (from on-site measurement of weather conditions) predicted to be above the 90% level using the major fuel model in which the fire is burning. ☐
2. Potential exists for "blowup" conditions (fuel moisture, winds, etc). ☐
3. Crowning, profuse or long-range spotting. ☐
4. Weather forecast indicating no significant relief or worsening conditions. ☐

B. FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES COMMITTED:

1. Responders may range from 200-500 or more. ☐
2. Numerous kinds and types of resources may be required including many that will trigger a formal demobilization process. ☐
3. Complex aviation operations involving multiple aircraft may be involved. ☐
4. Incident requires an Incident base and numerous other ICS facilities to provide support. ☐
5. Majority of initial attack resources committed. ☐

C. VALUES THREATENED:

1. Critical infrastructure or Key Resources may be adversely affected or possibly destroyed and actions to mitigate affects may extend into multiple Operational Periods and require considerable coordination. ☐
2. Restricted, threatened or endangered species habitat. ☐
3. Cultural/Heritage sites. ☐
4. Unique natural resources, special designation zones or wilderness. ☐
5. Other special resources. ☐

D. SAFETY:

1. Hazardous fire line conditions. ☐
2. Serious accidents or fatalities. ☐
3. Threat to safety of visitors from fire and related operations. ☐
4. Restrictions and/or closures in effect or being considered. ☐
5. No night operations in place for safety reasons. ☐

E. OWNERSHIP:

1. Fire burning or threatening more than one jurisdiction. ☐
2. Potential for claims (damages). ☐
3. Different or conflicting management objectives. ☐
4. Dispute over fire management responsibility and jurisdiction. ☐
5. Potential for Unified Command. ☐

F. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES:

1. Elected and appointed governing officials, stakeholder groups, and political organizations require a high level of interaction. ☐
2. Pre-existing controversies/relationships. ☐
3. Sensitive media relationships. ☐
4. Population surrounding general incident area is affected (smoke, evacuation, etc.) ☐

G. CHANGE IN STRATEGY

1. Change in strategy (from lower to higher intensity management).
2. Large amounts of unburned fuel within planned perimeter.
3. WFDSS DAR invalid or requires updating.

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H. EXISTING OVERHEAD:

1. Resources may need to remain at scene for extended operational periods, require complete logistical support, and numerous personnel replacements.
2. Existing management organization ineffective.
3. Overhead/IMT overextended mentally and/or physically.
4. Formal Incident Action Plan (IAP) needed for each operational period.

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RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

T1 IMT